

INTRODUCTION TO THE MOVEMENT SYSTEM AS THE FOUNDATION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPIST PRACTICE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Lisa Saladin, PT, PhD, FAPTA¹

Michael Voight, PT, DHSc, OCS, SCS, ATC, FAPTA²

ABSTRACT

In 2013, the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) adopted an inspiring new vision, “Transforming society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience.” This new vision for our profession calls us to action as physical therapists to transform society by using our skills, knowledge, and expertise related to the movement system in order to optimize movement, promote health and wellness, mitigate the progression of impairments, and prevent the development of (additional) disability. The guiding principle of the new vision is “identity,” which can be summarized as “The physical therapy profession will define and promote the movement system as the foundation for optimizing movement to improve the health of society.” Recognition and validation of the movement system is essential to understand the structure, function, and potential of the human body. As currently defined, the “movement system” represents the collection of systems (cardiovascular, pulmonary, endocrine, integumentary, nervous, and musculoskeletal) that interact to move the body or its component parts. By better characterizing physical therapists as movement system experts, we seek to solidify our professional identity within the medical community and society. The physical therapist will be responsible for evaluating and managing an individual's movement system across the lifespan to promote optimal development; diagnose impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions; and provide interventions targeted at preventing or ameliorating activity limitations and participation restrictions.

Level of Evidence: 5

Key Words: Movement System, professional identity, physical therapist practice

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Lisa Saladin

Provost, Medical University of South Carolina
Colcock Hall

179 Ashley Avenue – MSC 002
Charleston SC, 29425

¹ Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost,
Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC, USA

² Professor, Belmont University School of Physical Therapy,
Nashville, TN, USA